

**FLATHEAD COUNTY
LONG RANGE PLANNING TASK FORCE
Thursday, August 11, 2005
Earl Bennett Building
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

Members Present

Jeff Harris
Gary Hall
Charlie Johnson
Mike Pence
Tom Jentz
Jim Patrick
Chris Coughlin
Velvet Phillips-Sullivan
Bill Shaw
Turnew Askew
Diana Blend
Kerry Finely
Jane Levio
Jerry Nix
Karen Reeves
Myrt Webb

Members Absent

Jed Fisher
Dennis Hester
Mike Meehan
Marcia Sheffels
Bob Horne
Cal Scott
Richard Surynt

Others

Bill Spence
Mayre Flowers

Agenda & Minutes Approval

The agenda was accepted, but the order of new business was revised to present the Task Force's draft of the Web Page first, followed by a presentation from B J Grieves and Jeff Harris on resources for the Work Plan and Baseline Documents. Due to a problem with a computer virus, there were no previous minutes to approve.

Review of Web Site's First Draft

Jerry Nix of the Education and Outreach Committee presented the proposed website which will be on the County web pages. It will consist of an introduction & information page which will include a list of Task Force members, our vision statement, values and geographical data with a link to the GIS web page.

Another page was also presented to the Task Force which provides information on committee schedules, agendas, minutes and reports. Diana Blend asked committee chairmen to forward their minutes to her for proofing before the Education and Outreach Committee submits them to the webmaster. She also asked for the following format: date, time and place of meeting, members

present, agenda approval, old business, new business, member & public comments if any, future meeting schedule.

Jerry Nix offered the suggestion that the logo might need some updating. Joe Russell pointed out that it was the Flathead County logo and could not be changed by the Task Force. Diana Blend suggested, however, that a panoramic photo of the Flathead Valley be spread across the masthead of the web page, with the Task Force name embedded at the top. She also suggested adding photos around the GIS link and geographical data and changing them to keep the look of the site fresh.

Review of Work Plan and Identifying Baseline Document Resources

In an effort to assist the Planning Department in compiling baseline information and write reports, Jerry Nix began discussion on how the Task Force can help identify resources. He explained that Planning Department head Jeff Harris doesn't expect the Task Force to write the Baseline Document. Instead the Task Force needs to reflect what the community wants. The Task Force will also help out with forwarding information to the Planning Department for final reports.

Commissioner Gary Hall responded that there are funds in the county budget to recruit Cookie Davis, who works for the City of Kalispell, but has time available to the County with Kalispell's agreement. Cookie will work parttime accumulating data and downloading it from official sites, including Census data and GIS maps. Gary Hall also mentioned that Mike Pence has identified grant funds for this job.

A timeline for the process was distributed to the Task Force. Gary Hall said the Commissioners are working together with Jeff Harris on slowing things down to allow the planning staff to accumulate and process data, write reports and meet target dates. He pointed out that the Planning Board has recommended and the Commissioners have implemented interim procedures and criteria for processing master plan amendments, which includes a new set of guidelines for applications. He added that there would be no complete halt in processing applications. Instead the planning community will now have an idea of what they can expect and what the Planning Department needs. This will undoubtedly streamline the application requests making the process less cumbersome and more efficient.

Jeff Harris said that the Planning Department is telling applicants that they will get to their applications as time permits. He explained that there is no state statute as to the time required to process an application. "We are swamped," he stated. "A slowing down would help us, but those applications that come in that are good may be able to guide us in the policy and give us a little direction." In general, the planning department has returned most applications for a master plan amendment for revision. He forecasts that the new Growth Policy should be able to drive future planning and provide a framework for growth.

Gary Hall stated he was particularly pleased with work of the Task Force and the entire process thus far. He also said the Commissioners were pleased with Jeff Harris's leadership. "Our priority is to see that the Planning staff can do what they need to do," he added.

Jerry Nix informed the group that he purchased some planning books for use of the Task Force and Planning Department. Duplicate copies are being kept in the Planning Office.

BJ Grieves of the Planning Department then provided a Table of Contents for the Baseline Analysis and went through it item-by-item, while inquiring who or what agencies could assist. They were identified as follows:

INTRODUCTION

Brief History of Flathead County – Existing resources and local (Kalispell's) archives.

Description of physical & political boundaries – On GIS site

Description of Flathead County Government & enabling state legislation – Dennis Hester and staff

POPULATION

Graph of population growth from 1950 to most recent data – Census (staff)

HOUSING

Existing Characteristics

Map showing densities of existing housing units (owner occupied) and housing starts 2000-05 in Flathead County – septic/sewer permits, Flathead Electric

Text describing trends in housing starts from 1970 to present – includes discussion of housing market cycles in Flathead County – Cathy Schultze or Chris Ahner of NMAR. Byron Roberts of MBIA.

Data documenting the characteristics of the rental market in Flathead County – Montana Landlord's Association (headquartered in Helena, there is a local group as well.) Census.

Projections

Map showing projected densities of housing units in Flathead County in 2010 – Census Block Units, GIS

Text documenting anticipated demand for housing from 2005-2010 – zoning and population projections. (Jeff Harris suggested we focus on existing conditions and get to projections later.)

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Analysis of trends in various industries – Liz Harris of Montana West (Jobs Now)

Text and graphics of employment trends – Liz Harris of Montana West

Maps and text discussing median incomes and employment by census tracts to illustrate variations in income and employment across Flathead County – Census, Liz Harris of Montana West and the Montana State Dept. of Labor

LOCAL SERVICES

Text & graphs detailing solid waste generation in Flathead County since records began. Map of collection points Documentation of solid waste generation by region. – County landfill and waste management documents, standards.

Services provided by Flathead County Sheriff. Graphs illustrating number of calls per month or year, response times to various regions of county by year. Maps showing numbers of calls by location in Flathead County over last 5-10 years – Mike Meehan, Flathead County Sheriff, EMS, Fire Districts (Will add here, Health, Education and Communications services as well) Note: DNRC can help with fire district/fire hazard info

County parks locations and sizes. Documentation of park maintenance, use, and park acquisition /liquidation. Quantify service level. – Jed Fisher, County Parks

Quantifying levels of county services– Contact directly

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Maps showing the simple service boundaries of water and sewer services in Flathead County. Text discussing existing capacities – Joe Russell of County Health Department and Jerry Nix of Task Force

Descriptions of existing county buildings and uses– staff and Jed Fisher of County Parks

Maps of county roads, gravel vs. paved. Graphs showing miles of each since records began to present. Text and data describing areas of greatest use increases from 1990 to present. Maps of vehicle trips per day for select areas and/or intersections– Charlie Johnson of County Road Department and Tom Jentz

NATURAL RESOURCES

Maps of aquifers, wetlands, rivers, lakes and depth to groundwater. Floodplain maps – Gary Hall, Staff and Natural Resources Document, Kurt Hafferman, J. Stanford at Yellow Bay Research Center

Graphs of Timber sales by year to present. Graphs illustrating gravel extraction by year to present. Map of general gravel deposits – Staff and Natural Resources Document

Graphs showing recreational use of state and federal lakes, rivers and forests– Fish, Wildlife and Parks, U.S. National Forest, Natural Resources Document

LAND USES

Map showing areas of public and private lands– GIS, Karen Reeves, Barb Brand (Farm Hands), Jed Fisher, NRCS of lands, Fish Wildlife & Parks, Forest Service Maps.

Map showing residential, commercial, industrial and private recreational uses – GIS, Tax Rolls, Mt. Logging Association, Liz Harris of Montana West

Map of residential densities in Flathead County– GIS, Staff

Jeff Harris asked the Affordable Housing for their data within the next two weeks, preferably in the next week if possible.

Before concluding the meeting, brief reports were handed out or offered from some committees. Joe Russell gave a summary of the Water, Sewer and Stormwater Committee. Chris Coughlin gave an update on the Bike Paths and Alternative Transportation Committee. Velvet Sullivan Phillips provided a short report on the Affordable Housing Committee and Diana Blend passed out the minutes of the Outreach and Education Committee.

Task Force Member Comment

Karen Reeves questioned why a moratorium on development shouldn't be implemented. Gary Hall replied that the Commissioners and the Planning Board had addressed this issue and they decided against a moratorium and that it was now a moot issue.

Jerry Nix mentioned that the Task Force is open to new Columbia Falls members as there is a seat left for another representative from CF, plus an alternate.